

EXHIBIT 216

POLITICS

Questions raised in timeline of state response to Coffee County breach

The state has presented shifting timelines for when it knew of a breach of Coffee County equipment in January 2021.



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ATLANTA — There are new questions about when precisely Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger [knew about a breach in the Coffee County election office](#) of early January 2021, with shifting timelines being offered between public statements from the Secretary of State's Office and court filings by state attorneys in a [lawsuit](#) challenging the security of the state's voting system.



Last Thursday, 11Alive's Doug Richards interviewed Secretary Raffensperger and asked him on camera when he first learned about the breach. Raffensperger initially answered January of 2021, but within minutes of answering, an aide to Raffensperger corrected the Secretary of State's response off camera and offered May of 2021 as the correct date.

11Alive used that corrected information in our on-air report and removed a full interview with Raffensperger from [YouTube](#), which included the earlier, initial answer of January 2021.

However, on Friday, a representative with the Secretary of State's Office clarified that the office did not know about or began investigating Coffee County until July 2022.

Because of these discrepancies in the three different timelines, 11Alive is republishing the full interview, which you can watch [below](#):

Raffensperger talks Coffee County probe, election | Full interview



The timeline comes into focus ahead of a hearing in the lawsuit, *Curling v. Raffensperger*, on Monday. The suit is a longstanding challenge to Georgia's electronic voting system, dating to well before the 2020 election, brought by a coalition trying to compel the state to use hand-marked paper ballots.

It is through this lawsuit that [videos have emerged in recent weeks](#) of pro-Trump activists at the Coffee County election office on Jan. 7, 2021.

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While there, the activists allegedly copied systems data from the election equipment on site - with one video specifically showing them handling and working around poll pads. The poll pads are tablets which produce the voting cards people need to use to start the voting process, and state officials [told *The New York Times*](#) that the poll pads "have voter information but it's not accessible because it's scrambled behind security protocols."



One of the activists, Atlanta area businessman Scott Hall, has said in an audio recording released as part of the lawsuit that a computer forensics team allegedly hired by Trump attorney Sidney Powell "went in there and imaged every hard drive of every piece of equipment."

This allegedly occurred with the complicity of local Coffee County officials, including the former county GOP chairwoman Cathy Latham.

"We basically had the entire elections committee there. And they said: 'We give you permission. Go for it,'" Hall reportedly said.

The episode has resulted in a criminal investigation launched by the Georgia Bureau of Investigation and Georgia Secretary of State's Office - with 11Alive's Doug Richards [reporting on that investigation as early as May of this year](#).

State officials, however, have provided an imprecise version of the timeline of their knowledge of the incident and their actions in response.

- **Jan. 7, 2021:** Breach occurs in Coffee County election office
- **Jan. 2021:** In [interview last week](#), this is when Raffensperger first said he learned of the incident.
- **May 2021:** Minutes later, after the conclusion of the interview, an aide told 11Alive he misspoke and corrected that date to May 2021.
- **Feb. 2022:** The next day, state official Gabriel Sterling spoke to 11Alive and said the "claim was made" in Feb. 2022.
- **May 2022:** 11Alive [reports on the existence](#) of the investigation into the incident.
- **July 2022:** Attorneys for the state in court, and Sterling in a statement to 11Alive, have said this is when "supporting evidence" for allegations about the incident were found.

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SPEAKERS

Brad Raffensperger, Doug Richards

Doug Richards 00:00

Coffee County. When did the Secretary of State's office first know about coffee County?

Brad Raffensperger 00:04

Oh, very early on, and we put investigators on it. And then at some point, there's our resources that we have only go for a certain point. And we reached out to the GBI, because they have additional resources, technical resources, that they can really do a deep dive on some of the things, they have a wider purview, we reached out to them. And then as we kept on digging deeper, working with the state election board, also the Attorney General's Office, there's been a reach out to the federal investigative office agency that has even additional resources that transcend our state borders. But it's an ongoing investigation, I will tell you that it's very serious what they have alleged to do. I don't want to go too far into that. But I believe that if it is supported by what we believe it'll be supported by, they should be prosecuted. And these are criminal violations. And that usually means that people will leave behind bars at the end of the day. This is not just paying a fine. And also the state of Georgia has incurred and will incur financial costs because of what's been done to the voting equipment. And we therefore want that equipment replaced at the other people's cost, not at our cost. And so we'll proceeding on that.

Doug Richards 01:24

You sent an investigator into Coffey County in May of 2021. And the GBI didn't get called in until more than a year later,

Brad Raffensperger 01:33

yeah,

Doug Richards 01:33

what happened in the interim,

Brad Raffensperger 01:34

we were doing our work, investigating digging deep, exactly what was going on. But sometimes you reach that point where you need additional power. First of all, if you want to do subpoenas, that will require the state election board, but you have to understand for well over six months, we didn't have a chair of the state election board, because the existing chair had then moved to another state agency. And so we had a vacancy there. And so it took a while to get an acting chair that we could do this subpoena, which was what we did with through the vote to get that information. And that's been stymied, because they're not providing that they're not being a cooperating organization and that investigation, so we were somewhat stymied on that. And then the GBI didn't have that hurdle. So we reached out to them, but also, some of the resources we needed our capabilities that they do have, because it's criminal versus a process of elections.

Doug Richards 02:28

The plaintiffs in the lawsuit unearthed the surveillance video in Coffee County. Shouldn't your office have been able to do that, and

Brad Raffensperger 02:36

they actually should have released that sooner and they weren't holding on to that they wanted, I guess, some kind of a gotcha moment playing on the legal side. When you hear about potential illegality, I think you have a responsibility as a responsible American citizen, to give that to law enforcement agencies instead of playing trying to play a political gotcha moment game.

Doug Richards 02:58

Should your office have gotten that video when you're open the investigation and 2021 rather than emerging a few weeks ago?

Brad Raffensperger 03:06

Well, that came out of a lawsuit that's been going on since 2017. And that's another matter that's under litigation. So I'll let that go with that.

Doug Richards 03:14

I guess what I'm asking is, I think the question is that the Secretary of State's office take the coffee county issue seriously. And if you had wouldn't have been able to get this information months ago?

Brad Raffensperger 03:30

Well, we were provided information and now is, it appears to be apparent that these people were not speaking truthfully to our investigators.

Doug Richards 03:45

Gabriel Serling said in April of this year that there was nothing happened in coffee County. Do you know why he said that?

Brad Raffensperger 03:52

Because it has an appearance to be apparent that the people were not providing truthful testimony as part of that investigation process. And it appears that testimony was provided to a grand jury that was not supported by the truth. And I'll let it go at that because it's an ongoing investigation.

Doug Richards 04:18

So do you does the does what happened in coffee county represent a threat to this November's election.

Brad Raffensperger 04:26

No, that server was just replaced for that particular county, but it does does show that it is very important that county election, you can have a rogue actor. That's what we had, apparently down in coffee County. And so it's very important that we are looking that when you swear that oath to follow the state law, follow the SEB regulations. And then also make sure that you're following the Constitution of the State of Georgia and the United States Constitution, that you have people of integrity and all these offices. And when you find that People don't have that integrity, that they need to be replaced, they need to be terminated. And if there were violations, they need to be prosecuted to the fullest extent of law.

Doug Richards 05:09

If a bad actor wanted to undermine the upcoming election, wouldn't they do something exactly like they did,

Brad Raffensperger 05:14

and they would attempt to do that. But you have to also understand, and I would hope all voters understand this, that when you make your selections, you know, on the ballot marking device, and it prints it out, you can look at there. And did you vote for Barry? Or did you vote for Bob for that particular race you get to look at your ballot, then you walk it over to the scanner, and then you you put that in the scanner, and it is where it is scanned, and then eventually it is tabulated. If there's any question what happens with a ballot marking device, you'll see it immediately. So you can the voter can verify that their vote was accurately counted. So you taken that out that that could be a potential area of fraud. Then when you go over to the scanner, and you scan it, that's why you do audits. And that's what we do LAT testing, and that's why one county, down in South Georgia did their LMA testing just a few days ago, earlier in the week and other counties are doing it all sorts of times. And I we see when those reports I know DeKalb County is doing there's absentee is one day, the early voters and another day and then the Election Day, L&A testing is will be on the third day by sale that is the county is doing the L&A logic and accuracy testing right now. But also we're going to follow that up after the election with audits. And that means races can be honored any race because you have a paper ballot, and that is the official ballot, you can audit that race to verify the count. And that's what we did in 2020. And many people don't realize that all 5 million pieces of paper all 5 million ballots, were hand re counted. And you looked at the human readable text who did you vote for President Donald J. Trump, Joseph R Biden, or Joe Jorgensen, the Libertarian. And when you do that, and you get the same result, many of the counties had no vote total differences. When you get the same result. As we got with the scanners, it shows that the machines did not flip the votes, the accurate record results. I understand that people were disappointed that on my side of the aisle, and I get that, but the machines were verified that

they're accurate. Then also people need to understand, we just didn't buy these things right off the shelf. That goes through several years of going through the United States Election Assistance Commission. The General Assembly put in that any new machine that was going to be used they process any company had to have certified machines for the United States Election Assistance Commission. We did that. And then once we got these machines, we then went ahead and did our own testing our own in house testing and then we after post election of 2020. We sent a sample size out with Pro V and V.

Doug Richards 09:47

Last question. You're opposed to switching out the computerized voting machines with landmark paper ballots. Why are you so opposed to

Brad Raffensperger 09:55

that? Well, I think that Secretary of State Kathy Cox made the best point and she happened to be a Democrat. But what she said is all during the 90s, before we had electronic voting, she said we were some counties done Bibb County and other parts, we had people that didn't have the same skill or same educational background as you might have in an urban area, that what they saw was these had sometimes 11 to 13% of over votes under votes, double County, rejected ballots, people that were disenfranchised. And she said, as soon as we went to electronic machines, the rate of disenfranchise went down to a very low percentage because you, you eliminated those over votes and under votes, I don't want anyone to be disenfranchised. And with a ballot marking device, which prints out you can look exactly who you want it. But when you do a hammer paper battle, what happens if they marked something a little bit different, and all of a sudden, you have a team, politicians or lawyers from each political party looking at that, and they're taking this to court to try to win a court battle? I think it's the battle should be at the ballot box, not at the courthouse. And that's where it's really important that you Your vote will count. It'll be recorded accurately. And that's why I think Catherine Cox spoke wisdom during the safe commission about that specific issue. And many of the Republicans felt the same way. The didn't want to have a Bush v Gore type of situation. I think what people need to understand when you when you win, and you lose, you lost that day, but you can come back and run again and two years or four years or six years, whatever that term is.